

# Revolution is the solution to worsening crisis generated by hegemony of US imperialism



NEARLY TWO YEARS OF ILLEGITIMATE rule, Marcos Jr has become a staunch puppet of US imperialism. He established a fascist and weak neocolony that utilizes state terrorism to perpetuate and further expand the imposition of neoliberal economic policies in the Philippines.

These neoliberal policies include the depression of wages, destruction of job security, reduction of taxes of big foreign corporations, liberalization of business and capital, privatization of profitable public assets, removal of regulations protecting labor, women and the environment, and placing the Philippine economy under the control of foreign monopoly corporations. Destruction of local productive forces,

deprivation of the people of their means of production especially land, and weakening of the local economy are the results of such.

Marcos Jr brags about the development of Philippine economy through his various travels to different countries for "economic deals" that only serve to solidify liberalization, privatization, and deregulation schemes. On the other hand, he deliberately destroyed the lives and livelihoods of the majority of the Filipino people—the farmers and workers. The mercenary Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) are the ones who ensure that nothing will

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hinder the implementation of the interest of US imperialism and its powerful allied countries.

Neoliberal projects bring devastation to the people and the environment. In Negros Island, destructive mining operations in Sipalay City, Negros Occidental and Santa Catalina, Negros Oriental have displaced peasant communities in search of precious minerals. In the long experience of farmers who were victims of big mining companies, due to destructive mining, the once fertile lands were destroyed, forests were denuded and rivers became polluted and contaminated. Several quarry projects throughout Negros Island have also damaged rivers and resulted in flash floods.

Reclassification and land-use conversion from agricultural to commercial use, solar farms, eco-tourism, plantations of crops for export and other non-productive uses have also resulted in widespread land-grabbing of peasant land and destruction of their livelihoods.

The oil palm plantation in Candoni, Negros Occidental is forcing farmers to abandon rice and corn, instead plant oil palms. It promises big profits to farmers, but behind it is a bankrupt future and infertile land. Meanwhile, the Tamlang Valley Zone of Peace targets thousands of hectares of forests in Santa Catalina and neighboring towns for eco-tourism and mining operations which will also affect many peasant and indigenous

people communities.

Reclamation projects in the island's urban centers (Bacolod City in Negros Occidental and Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental) will displace tens of thousands of Negrosanons and ruin coastlines and seas that fishermen depend on for their livelihood and are home to many marine life. Moreover, privatization and commercialization of public services such as water, electricity, and public transport "modernization" are interconnected with the plan to establish a Super City in Bacolod. The PUV modernization program that small operators and drivers continue to resist is utterly anti-poor and pro-big business.

The oppressive and exploitative system of the monocrop sugar economy has particularly burdened Negrosanons for a long time. It has further squeezed farmers and farm workers through the importation of thousands of tons of sugar and the hoarding of sacks of sugar by cartels to manipulate market prices, creating an unsolvable crisis.

The aforementioned neoliberal objectives have made Negrosanons suffer, whether in the cities or the countryside. State terrorism that caused countless human rights violations delivers neoliberal projects especially to the countryside.


The campaign of suppression and counterrevolution of the AFP, PNP and National Task Force (NTF)-Elcac, much like neoliberalism, spreads unprecedented harm to the people through air strikes, bombings, strafings, mas-

sacres and killings, torture, illegal arrests, theft, setting fire to forests, and others. These are intended to silence the people's struggle for their rights and drive them away so that businesses of big landlords and compradors in cahoots with foreign corporations is unrestricted.

Due to this, the collective resistance of Negrosanons is necessary against neoliberal attacks on Negros Island. The thousands of farmers and farm workers, industrial workers, fisherfolk, church people, human rights and environmental defenders,


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# Bitter work conditions for sweet sugar

AT FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE morning, Tatay Romeo, 66 years old from Cadiz City, woke up to prepare for the entire day of cutting and loading sugarcane. Nanay Celia, 52 years old, also woke up at the same time to prepare for assigning work and work areas (*pang-arima*) to farm workers. They drink coffee, eat a bit and make sure to pack food for an entire day's work, rain or shine. Each of them must be at work at six o'clock in the morning.

Negros Island is known for its quality and sweet sugar from sugarcane produced in 62% of the island's land area that contributes to almost 70% of total sugar production in the Philippines.

For Tay Romeo's extremely dangerous around-the-clock work of cutting and loading sugarcane, the landlord merely payed the labor of his group on piece-rate (*pakyaw*) of ₱190 per ton. It is better during milling season because he can get as much as ₱2,000 per week, but he only earns half of this amount when its off-milling season from working on piece-rate, including weeding.

"Our wages are really not enough to make ends meet considering our weekly needs, we can only afford our expenses once we get our pension," Tatay Romeo said while calculating his household expenses. Each week, he allots ₱500 for rice, ₱350 for fish and dried fish, ₱200 for other needs, ₱1,000 for the allowance of his two college students who are sponsored by his relatives, and saves ₱500 for the monthly electricity bill.

In paper, Tay Romeo is already retired from working in sugarcane fields since he was 15 years old. He is seemingly lucky because he is one those who have SSS benefits and now receives a monthly SSS pension of ₱3,000, but with no land to till, he is forced to continue cutting and load-ing sugarcane to provide for his family.

In another part of Negros Island, in the town of Toboso, Nanay Celia endures a ₱150 daily wage for three hours of work in sugarcane fields. For working six days per week, she earns barely ₱1,000.

"If Tim Ballesteros had not increase wages by ₱15 daily after the NPAs burned his trucks (in January 2023), our wages would not have been raised," shared Nay Celia. Tim Ballesteros is the leading comprador-landlord in northern parts of Negros and the one who dictates wages and the management of work in sugarcane fields.

Tay Romeo and Nay Celia are among the es-timated 380,000 farm workers in sugarcane fields on Negros Island. There are another 18,000 workers all over the island scattered in 12 sugar mills (of the 27 in the entire Philippines).

Berting, 39 years old from Toboso, is one of the sugar mill workers. He is a 'hooker' in a transloading station where he unloads sugar-canes from the truck and loads these to a hauler to transport the sugarcane to the mills. He works in a transloading station owned by Victorias Milling Corporation (VMC), the biggest sugar mill

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urban poor, vendors, drivers, youth, professional, and other affected must be continuedly aroused, organized, and mobilized to stifle imperialist interests of plundering the country's resources and exacerbate the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system. Anti-feudal and economic campaigns also need to be linked and raised alongside anti-fascist and anti-imperialist campaigns to intensify the fight against all-out attacks

of the puppet and fascist Marcos Jr regime.

The New People's Army should even more invigorate its determination to make the enemy bleed from a thousand cuts to the body and occasional blows to the head to prevent the entry of foreign and local big companies in militarized areas. Arm Red fighters not only with guns, but with the capacity for ceaseless and painstaking revolutionary propaganda and organizing to aim the people's rage towards

the onslaught of the AFP and PNP in the countryside.

The strength of the masses and the entire oppressed and exploited people must be mustered to advance the revolution and achieve national and social liberation. Revolution is the only real and lasting solution to the worsening economic, political, military, and cultural crisis generated by the hegemony of US imperialism in the country in complicity with the local ruling class.*RP*

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in the entire Asia, but he still works on piece-rate of ₱5 per ton. For 20 years of work as a 'hooker,' his wage increased only once in 2012; already over a decade since wages for unloading-loading sugarcane were raised by ₱1 per ton.

"We are casual workers until now as there are no regular 'hookers' that I know of here in Toboso. It is either too hot or we are drenched in the rain because transloading stations should be cleared," Berting said. Because Berting is not a regular worker, he does not receive any benefits like SSS or 13th month pay. He brings ₱5,000 every 15 days to his family.

The work of 'hookers' like Berting is very dangerous. The heat is scorching during summer, while narrow ladders they use to board the trucks and the sugarcane are very slippery during the rainy season. The company does not provide them uniforms or any form of protective gear.

With the successive increase of price of goods, farm and mill workers have not received any substantial increase to their wages. "People need to unite to solve the problem and crisis, like expensive goods and the need to increase wages," Nay Celia said. When asked what workers currently need, Berting answered, "wage increase, with SSS included." Livelihood is Tay Romeo's demand, "land to till and just

wages and benefits so we can live properly without hunger."

Tay Romeo also pointed out that the piece-rate (*pakyaw*) system is the reason why their wages are low. "The management of haciendas is unjust, especially those work entrusted to contractors, usually we are only given piece-rate jobs. We only earn very little each week," Tay Romeo concluded.

Tatay Romeo, Nanay Celia, and Berting are some of those who work hard and sell their labor power to produce sugar that sweetens people's food and drinks, yet their lives that are tied to sugarcane plantations are very bitter. **AP**





# SPLIT program: Breaking up peasant unity



AS MARCOS JR CAME TO power, he ensured the promotion of neoliberal policies in the Philippines at the behest of imperialist US. Regarding land, the Marcos II regime fully implemented the Support to Parcelization of Land for Individual Titling (SPLIT) funded by the World Bank. His regime used the SPLIT program to deceive farmers and seize their lands. Due to this, it is easy to transfer land ownership from farmers to landlords and big comprador bourgeoisie.

In 2020, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) started the implementation of the SPLIT program. It was funded through a loan from the World Bank in the amount of ₱20.4 billion. The SPLIT program aims to fully eradicate the Collective Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CCLOA) held by agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) towards in-

dividual ownership. DAR also promised that through individualizing land titles, ARBs will have more security to own land and improve their farm work.

DAR targets to individualize 139,000 CCLOAs from 2020 to 2024 and plans to extend this in the next two years. This covers 1.4 million hectares of land with 1.1 million ARBs in 77 provinces. Thirteen percent of these are also in Western Visayas.

On Negros Island, DAR is in the process of validating CCLOAs of ARBs and after this, the CCLOAs will be divided. DAR has set-up an office to ensure the implementation of SPLIT.

But for Tatay Kulas, an ARB from Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental, he was dismayed with DAR's SPLIT project. "Those in power made laws and programs without taking into account our genuine problems. The SPLIT project cannot be a solution to

our suffering now that fertilizer and pesticides are very expensive, our products are bought cheap and there is insufficient *El Niño* subsidy," Tatay Kulas said.

The declaration of the Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer of DAR that if she does not agree to participate in SPLIT, her name will no longer be included in the awarding of individual titles also created fear for Nanay Letty from Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental.

Nanay Letty added, "SPLIT will destroy the unity of peasant organizations. If titles are individualized, it will not be difficult for the ruling classes and landlords to trick the ARBs into selling or leasing (*ariendo*) their lands."

Delia, from the aforementioned city, is also worried that when she takes a loan from the

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# Oil palm, farmers' nightmare

THE PURSUIT OF "PERMANENT PEACE and sustainable development of insurgency-free areas" under the US-Marcos regime hides a dark reality—paving the way for destructive neoliberal projects to take root. Negros Island is witness to the utterly obvious damage caused not only to the environment but most of all to its people, their livelihoods, and their homes.

Oil palm is an export crop that only caters to the needs of foreign imperialists and their puppet comprador-landlords. In the lands of Candoni, Negros Occidental, there lies an ongoing conflict of interest and plans that may affect the entire island. The widespread planting of oil palm that is bragged as the bringer of development, entails an even greater disaster of land-grabbing, loss of livelihood and environmental destruction.

Last year, the Consunji family-owned DMCi Corporation in cahoots with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) planned to convert 6,000 hectares of land in the countryside to an oil palm plantation. It is expected to last for 50 years (initially 25 years and can be extended for another 25 years). Several families have expressed their opposition to this project, due to the destruction it brings to their livelihoods and land.

Candoni LGU councilor and environment committee chairman Dember Catipunan repeatedly spouts reactionary propaganda that the families are 'guaranteed jobs and relocation,' and he glossed over the fact that the project will result to land-grabbing and force the evacuation of farmers and indigenous peoples.

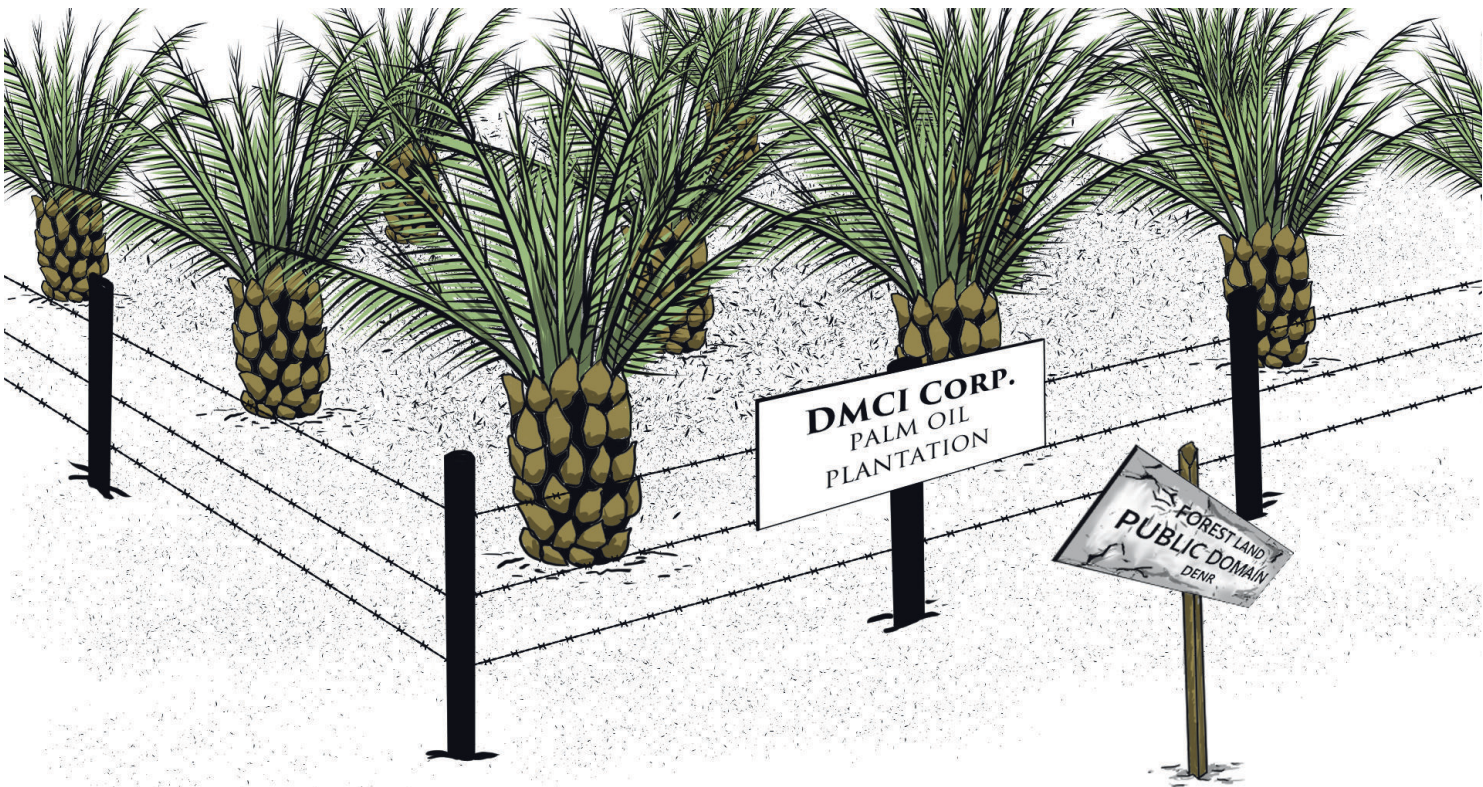
The oil palm plantation can be the beginning of extremely dangerous land-use conversion in the countryside, land-grabbing, and conversion of the use of forestal lands that are mostly inhabited by farmers. The Oil palm industry such as the Agumil Company in Palawan and North Cotabato Oil Corporation in Mindanao has harmed farmers and indigenous peoples, because they are not allowed to engage in inter-crop farming for their consumption and they are essentially tied to a feudal and semifeudal form of exploitation.

This will create a massive influx of reactionary troops in the area. Neoliberal projects hand-in-hand with the NTF-Elcac's Barangay Development Program sow deception to trick communities into offering their own resources to the interest of foreign businesses.

Export crop plantations, like sugarcane plantations on Negros Island, are the source of economic and humanitarian crimes. Here persists various forms of semi-feudal exploitation.

Another trait of this "agri-business venture" is the propaganda of "reforestation." But Negros Island is a witness to

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bank using her individual land title as collateral, it will be easy for banks to seize her land if she is unable to pay her debt. This will add to her problem especially since she has school children and farming is their source of livelihood.

Manong Fausto is also unhappy with the SPLIT program because he and their community became victims of threats and harassment by the military to force them to participate in this project. According to him, "DAR personnel did not visit us. The military itself was used to coerce us to accept SPLIT."

For them who are ARBs and other peasants, it is not the SPLIT program that can effectively help them but the free distribution of land and comprehensive agricultural support. *AP*

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this deceptive scheme, for example the DENR's National Greening Program (NGP) that only plants trees for export like manggium, gemilina, and mahogany. Later, these areas were targeted for mining. In the case of oil palm, it is not meant for reforestation.

Oil palm plantation is a nightmare to be confronted by farmers not only in Candoni but in other parts of the island. This neoliberal project will engender severe hunger and poverty that will spark enthusiasm for revolutionary change. The struggle is not only against the oil palm plantation, it is a simultaneous anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-fascist campaign that will reverberate throughout Negros Island. *AP*

# Solusyon sa madamo nga "syon" ni Ka Kat

Subong  
Madamo na "syon"  
sa mga proklamasyon  
para daw  
sa rehabilitasyon  
sa pigado nga populasyon

Ang humay may taripikasyon  
kag tubo nga importasyon  
para daw sa proteksyon  
sa mangunguma kag mamumugon  
pero sa gihapon,  
adlaw-adlaw gakonsumisyon

Tubi kag kuryente,  
Bulong kag bisan ang twisyon  
Presyo nga gataas  
Makataas man sa altapresyon  
Iupod pa ang sa dyip  
nga modernisasyon

Baybay may reklamasyon  
para damo daw magbakasyon  
Pero ang maligsan  
Wala tadlong nga relokasyon  
Pangabuhian madula  
Sa ngalan sa turismo kag atraksyon

Dugangan pa sa mina  
Kwari, dam kag mga plantasyon  
Ang lasang mahalitan  
Magkadegradasyon  
Pero bahala na daw nga mulala ang polusyon  
Basta may bulawan nga makutkot  
Sa duta nga gin-ilog sa dumuluong  
kay dako bulig pag eleksyon

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# Mines excavating mountains, digging graves for Negrosanons

FOREIGN CAPITALIST COMPANIES MILK SEMICOLONIAL and semifeudal countries like the Philippines. It is tied to oppressive and exploitative economic and political laws that make Filipino people further suffer. Livelihoods of the masses (farmers and farm workers in the countryside) have been put on the brink of death while big comprador bourgeoisie-landlords seize billions of profits from neoliberal projects like mining operations that suck wealth out of the country's land.

Negros Island is one of those blessed with abundant natural resources and fertile lands. The people rely on the

mountains for their livelihood to meet their need to live. However, the entry of big foreign mining companies such as Midan Corporation has become an obstacle to their livelihood as it targets to dig the mountains in the barangays of San Francisco, Mila-grosa, Fatima, San Pedro, all in Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental and other barangays bordering the towns of Santa Catalina, Siaton, and Valencia, Negros Oriental.

Midan Corporation, a Korean company, is targeting to demolish 844 hectares of land. The operation began in 2022 through its permit approved by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB)

of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in 2018. But it was discovered that it had no permit from the provincial and local government and it did not hold a public consultation.

The main livelihood of farmers in the area is planting coconut, corn, rice, banana, and ginger which are being threatened to be destroyed by large equipment of the mining company in exchange for gold, silver, copper, and other minerals for export.

Due to the residents' fear of the damage caused by the company's large-scale exploration,

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Diba,  
sobra kadamo nga syon?  
Mga panginto kag imbensyon  
Ang bug-os nga termino?  
Neoliberalisasyon  
Liberalisasyon  
Pribatisasyon  
Deregulasyon  
Denasyunalisasyon  
Para sa dumuluong nga atraksyon  
Imperyalistang interbensyon  
Nga puno man sang korapsyon  
  
Amo man ang rason  
Sa nagalala nga pasismo  
Kag militarisasyon  
Para masiguro  
Nga indi mapunggan

ang interes  
sa nagahari nga paksyon  
  
Ang resulta,  
gutom, patay,  
kag konsumisyon  
sa pumuluyo nga  
bisan ang simple nga mabuhi  
daw imposible na nga misyon  
  
Kasaysayan ang aton leksyon  
Para malampuwasan  
Ang kabudlayan kag tensyon  
Pabaskugon ang organisasyon  
Kag ang kolektibo nga aksyon  
Wala lain nga -syon  
Ang makapirde sa ila madamo nga bersyon  
Ang solusyon?  
Armado nga rebolusyon. **RP**





*"Mines..." from page 8*

they made a collective effort to launch protest rallies along with municipal and barangay officials of Sta. Catalina last April 12 against the ongoing exploration in Sitio Tarug, Brgy. San Francisco in the said town. Before this, residents from several areas targeted for mining made a joint resolution to call for an immediate halt of the mining exploration before it becomes a full-scale operation that will harm the people and the environment. It can be recalled that the municipal council has already declared Sitio Tarug as an area for eco-tourism. It has also been declared as a watershed area with rich biodiversity, waterfalls, and cave systems, and serves as habitat for thousands of fruit and vampire bats.

Just like Tatay Pedro, a farmer in the area, married with three children, who is worried

about the damage of mining to his livelihood. Tatay Pedro is a tenant with insufficient income because of unjust land rent (wherein one part of the net income is given to the landlord and the rest to the tenant who also shoulders all the expenses) so he was forced to work as part-time guard in the mine to supplement expenses for his family's needs. But in the long run, Tatay foresaw that his production was gradually affected and the land tilled by residents was also destroyed, which will eventually displace their livelihood. Thus, Tatay Pedro is part of the many people who oppose the continuation of gold exploration for foreigners while rich resources of the land where they live and they rely on for their livelihoods are being destroyed.

The terror that is now faced by residents affected by the mining operations in several

towns in Negros Oriental has also become a nightmare for residents who were victims of mining operations in the southern portion of Negros Occidental. It can be recalled that the barangays of Manlucahoc, Camindangan, and Nabulao in Sipalay City; Brgy. Damutan, Hinobaan; and Brgy. Gatuslao, Candoni were excavated by big mining companies. The damages of Lepanto Mining, Colet Mining, Selenga Mining, and Philex Mining continue to trouble the residents. The impact of mining to their livelihood and the environment has become long-term such as erosion of the land they are tilling and rock slides burying their crops, wells and springs that were once sources of potable water are now unusable due to chemicals used, the death of various kinds of trees, plants, and animals that thrive

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# Truth behind reclamation: deprivation of lives and livelihoods

THE TERM 'INFORMAL SETTLERS' OR the more derogatory, 'squatters,' are often used by the reactionary government to describe poor communities in urban areas. However, who is really ruining the land and driving longtime residents out of the cities? In fact, foreign companies and their local partners are the real squatters.

This is what happened on Negros Island where private companies owned by big compradors and bureaucrats attacked urban poor and coastal communities. Behind the old promise of "development" and "economic opportunities," big businesses have destroyed the lives and livelihoods of thousands of families to implement the reclamation project where in time buildings, commercial centers, ports, and others will be built based on neoliberal policies.

In the barangays of Pahanocoy and Banago in Bacolod City, the objective of projects pushed by Jerry Sy and Engr. Andre Taculod is land reclamation and establishment of businesses. Sy intends to build several malls, ports, shipyards and other buildings. However, these projects will affect no less than 10,000 individuals living in the area.

Meanwhile, Mayor Remulla wants to turn Brgy. Tinago in Dumaguete City into a stadium with an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Remulla hopes to hold the Southeast Asian Games in Dumaguete in the future. Thousands of houses are threatened to be demolished. At the start of the reclamation, fisherfolks needed to detour their small boats because local government has blocked the way for the reclamation.

Nong Jasper, a fisherman in Banago, has no regular income because fishing relies on the weather. Usually, his daily income of ₱300 is not enough for the basic needs of his three school-aged children.

The situation of Manang Myrna who is a sidewalk vendor living in Pahanocoy for five years now is similar. On a good day, she earns ₱200 from selling fish by the roadside. But her income is not sufficient to buy food for her family, and so she is forced to loan money to survive.

Mercy, from Barangay Tinago, is a contractual government employee. She adjusts the daily expenses according to the ₱10,000 she accumulated from her minimum wage and from

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on land and near the river and also fish kill. Part of their worries is the proliferation of skin diseases caused by mining wastes that poisoned the river water affecting residents of barangays Mambarato, Cabadiangan, and Manlucahoc, all in Sipalay City.

Cracks in the land due to mining has become a catastrophe for the lives of residents until now because the city's local government did not address the problem and the big mining companies ignored the harm

they passed on to the people.

As the economic and political power of the ruling class in cahoots with money-grubbing bureaucrats and military forces continues to expand, the people expect the depletion of the country's natural resources. Profits of foreign capitalists grow in exchange for harm and danger to the lives and livelihood of the people. In the long experience on Negros Island regarding the control of natural resources and land-grabbing, the people's strength is decisive in confronting these.

The masses' push for a just struggle to acquire land for livelihood, for humane working conditions, lives free from disasters caused by destructive mining operations, and an end to state fascism and terrorism targeting the people both in the cities and the countryside is crucial at this time. Only the people's strength alongside the continuing advancement of the armed revolution is the solution to the worsening oppression and exploitation of the people. **RP**



"Truth..." from page 10

the income of her husband as a full-time fisherman every month. The money is already spent after paying utilities like water and electricity bills, and buying their daily needs.

Local residents are full of worry on how the local government sugarcoats reclamation projects that will affect the residents. If these projects are fully carried out in the cities of Bacolod and Dumaguete, the likes of Jasper, Myrna, Mercy and thousands of other residents will lose their jobs because their source of livelihood for over a decade will be destroyed.

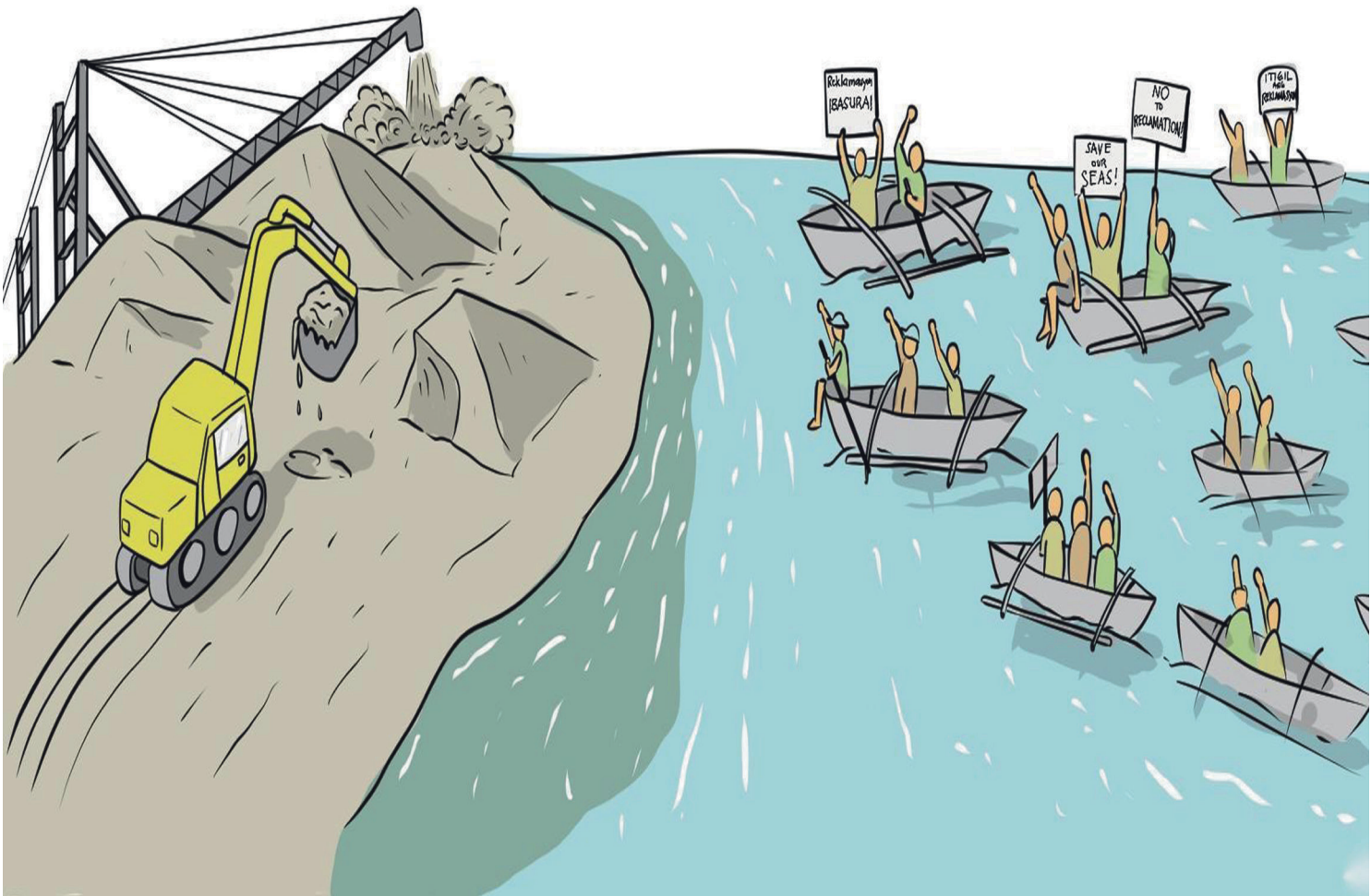
Moreover, these projects have caused alarm among environmental groups due to the

extent of the damage to coastal flora and fauna. The "Smart City", another project in Dumaguete proposed by EM Cuerpo Inc. that spans 174 hectares will cause total destruction to corals, mangroves, and four marine protected areas.

Common to these projects is the absence of the formal process of public consultation and transparency to the people, hastening the implementation of business interests. Government institutions like the DENR and LGUs are often negligent and conspire with big companies. They secretly pocket kickbacks and make other corrupt schemes to ensure that these projects are not impeded by the people's resistance.

However, the residents of

Brgy. Banago and Pahonocoy in Bacolod and Brgy. Tinago in Dumaguete along with the majority of the people have a united call: "Resist neoliberalization!," "Reject reclamation!" and "Protect our natural resources!" People's organizations like the No to 174 Alliance, Save Tinago Alliance, and Bacolod Against Reclamation Movement have brought together urban poor, church workers from various congregations, scientists, environmental and human rights defenders, students, lawyers, and other professionals to unite and call for resistance against the reclamation and neoliberal aggression that brings harm to coastal coastal communities and the environment. **AP**





## Superficial growth in the "Super City"

BUSINESSMAN AND BACOLOD CITY MAYOR Albee Benitez is resolute in his ambition to turn Bacolod City into a "Super City," a move which embeds the city deeper within the framework of aggressive neoliberal policies.

Last year, the declaration of Bacolod City as "insurgency-free" through the Regional Joint Peace and Security Coordinating Council (RJPSCC)-Western Visayas played a pivotal role. This announcement seems strategically intertwined with their efforts to craft an illusion of a "peaceful" city, aimed at attracting big capital.

Amidst this grand vision is a stark reality: the plight of thousands of jeepney drivers, urban poor, fisherfolk, and the broad basic masses is left behind in the relentless pursuit of "progress" tailored for foreign capital, big comprador bourgeoisie, and landlords.

In the eyes of neoliberalism, basic services for the people are handed over to the hands of big business. In Bacolod City, Albee Benitez expedited the privatization of key services—evident in the sudden endorsement of a Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) between the Central Negros Electric Cooperative Inc. (CENECO) and the Razon-owned MORE Power on July 3, 2023.

This decision triggered outrage and protests of consumers. Due to the desperation to gain huge profits if the control of power services is already in their hands, MORE Power maneuvered the plebiscite and votes.

Presently, the Senate has approved the bill permitting the franchise of Negros Electric Power and Corporation (NEPC),

the joint venture between MORE Power and CENECO. It is expected that upon the implementation of this privatization, 420 workers will be laid-off. This is similar to what previously happened to Bacolod City Water District (BACIWA) that resulted to the unjust termination of 57 employees.

It has already been almost four years since the Villars assumed control of BACIWA through Prime Water. Consumers remain dissatisfied due to recurring issues such as tainted water and poor service quality. Furthermore, despite a ruling of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Region 6 in favor of reinstatement of the terminated workers, the Villars never acknowledged the decision.

The national thrust to phase

out traditional jeepneys through forced consolidation of individual franchises affects over 2,500 drivers in Bacolod City. Through City Ordinance 966 or the Local Public Transport Route Plan (LPTRP), the "one route, one franchise" will be implemented, which favors corporations or cooperatives capable of owning 15 modern jeepney units or more.

Bert, a driver of 22 years, fears for the future of his family of five. He has only attained a high school education and he does not know what to do when traditional jeepneys is phased out.

"It is clear to me that the development claimed by Mayor is only for his friends, not for us

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poor people," Bert said.

Another flagship program of Mayor Benitez is the Yuhum Village in Brgy. 8, and barangays Vista Alegre and Bana-go which are part of the Pambansang Pabahay para sa Pilipino (4PH) pro-gram of Marcos Jr. Yuhum Village is being hailed as a significant step by the reactionary government, which plans to turn over 300 housing units this year.

"What are we to do with the housing offered by Albee when we cannot even afford the monthly rent. Our daily income is not enough for our food," Bebot, a fish vendor with five children from Brgy. Banago, said. Ini-tial survey by the LGU for the housing project sets a monthly rental fee of ₱2,500 for each unit.

Bebot's house is among the 22 homes to be first displaced in the im-pending thousand-hectare reclamation project in Brgy. Banago's coastline, which is prospected to be developed as an international port and business centers. Bebot's husband is one of the more than 2,000 fisherfolks who will lose their livelihood.

Thus, it is essential to note that Mayor Albee's vision of a "Super City" is a promise spoken by a bureaucrat capitalist hailing from a family en-riched by Marcos cronyism. In reality, his vision entails sacrificing both the city and its residents on the altar of corporate greed.

And if the broad masses oppose such policies, reactionary government ideologues would accuse them of op-posing "progress." But there can never be genuine progress under the current semicolonial and semifeudal system. Such reality affirms the urgency and correctness of our call for national in-dustrialization. Genuine progress can only be attained when the toiling masses, rather than foreign corpora-tions and their local compradors, are the ones who take charge how re-sources are utilized to meet the needs of the people. **AP**

# Neoliberalismo: kontrata nga magapatay sa tawo!

ni Ka Haraya

Isa ka higayon,  
siya ang nagmadinalag-on  
naglibot, nanglugayawon  
sa luwas sang pungsod  
naglingaw-lingaw, nagbakasyon  
negosyo gali ang matuod nga intensyon  
gintanyag ang matahum nga lalantawon,  
bukas nga merkado para sa dumuluong,  
mga pinoy para sa barato nga kusog-pamugon,  
malapad nga ruta para sa pangapital nga handum  
proyektong imprastraktura, reklamasyon,  
ekoturismo, mina kag plantasyon;

Padayaw niya,  
madamo siya sang nakuha nga imbestor  
magapasulod sang madamo nga proyekto  
magapasanyog kuno sa palangabuhian sang tawo  
kag pagpauswag sang pang-gubyerno,  
apang ilusyon lang ang pahamot nga mga tinaga  
laye pang-ekonomya kag pampulitika  
ligwa nga ginpauyatan sa kapitalista;

Nagtililipon ang mga uhaw sa ganansya  
nagapirma sang mga kasugtanan kag kontrata  
nagahigot sa pungsod sa agalon nga imperyalista  
pautang gali ang kuno ayuda  
pagpasulod sang negosyo,  
produkto man ukon pinansya  
pagabawi-on sa pagsuyop sang binilyon nga kita  
gikan sa aton manggaran nga kadagatan, suba ukon  
ruta,  
mayor nga kuluhaan sang produktong agrikultura  
gikan sa barato kag hilaw ginamanupaktura  
padulong sa mahal kag human na nga produkto  
ang pungsod nagserbe nga ila talambakan nga  
merkado;

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Bukas palad sa dumuluong nga pautang,  
sa idalom sang neoliberalismo nga patakaran  
manggad sang pungsod pagusto nga ginakup-an  
pumuluyong Pilipino naga-antus, ginapigos,  
tungod sa kasugtanan nga sa aton nag-gapos  
pagpang-ulipon ang naaguman  
gina-agaw ang duta nga aton palangabuhian,  
ginapalayas sa dutang puluy-an,  
gutom kag kapigaduhon ang aton nadangatan  
mangunguma sang pungsod sa duta gindingutan  
agud hawanan ang dalan  
para sa mga dambuhala nga ekwipo sang minahan  
kag pribado nga proyekto nga ila ginapadihotan  
apang ang katalagman kag kalamidad sang  
kinaiyahan  
pumuluyo sa lugar amo ang maperwisyonhan;

Nagapanguna nga pampublikong kinahanglanon  
ginahingabot sang pribado nga korporasyon  
agud nga sigpoton kutob sa mahugakom  
pagusto sa pagpasaka sang presyo  
nga indi na kontrolado sang gubyerno  
pampubliko nga serbisyo  
nahimo na nga negosyo  
Kasubong sang tubig kag kuryente  
nga target sang JVA,  
sa kubay sang dalagku nga burgesya kag burukarata  
60 porsyento nga bahin sa kita,  
sila ang gapanag-iya;

Pati ang transportasyon  
tuyo nga sudlon sang dalagko nga korporasyon  
prangkisa sang drayber kag opereytor  
pwersahan nga konsolidahon  
tradisyunal nga dyip nga hari sang dalanon  
pagabuslan sang Euro-4 nagabili sang kapin 2 ka  
milyon  
sa pagparada sang makidumuluong nga programa  
modernisasyon nga magapatay sa ila mga pamilya;

dagway sini ang sektor sang komunikasyon  
sa diin madugay na nga napaidalom  
sa balayon sang pribatisasyon  
indi malayo nga pati ospital kag eskwelahan  
amat-amat nga maagaw sang sakon nga  
pagdumalahan  
pagdula sang libre nga balayran  
para mga pobre nga pumuluyo nga wala sang  
ikasarang  
serbisyo sa pumuluyo himuon nga galatasan;

Neoliberalisasyon,  
dagway sang kontra-pumuluyo nga solusyon  
tikang sang nagabulos-bulos nga administrasyon  
nagapalala sa kagaruk sang nagahari nga pundasyon  
sang agalon mayduta kag dalagku kumprador  
burgesya  
pagahusgaran sang nagahimakas nga masa  
magadala sang handum sang demokratiko nga pwersa  
wasakon ang malapyudal kag malakolonyal nga  
sistema  
kadungan sa pag-angkon sang matuod nga kalinong,  
kahilwayan kag demokrasya! **RP**

